

New and Upgraded Dog Parks - Round 2



Program Guidelines

What is the New and Upgraded Dog Parks Program?

The Victorian Government has committed \$13.4 million to build and upgrade dog parks across Victoria. This investment will be delivered as a combination of both:

- Grants to councils to design and deliver new and upgraded dog parks in targeted locations (Round 1 – *funding is allocated and funding round closed*); and
- Competitive grants to councils to design and deliver new and upgraded dog parks based on the needs of local communities (Round 2 – *these guidelines*).

This investment will provide funding to local councils to design and deliver new or upgraded dog parks in designated locations across Victoria. This program also supports the continued implementation of the Victorian Government's [Open Space for Everyone Strategy 2021](#).

Round 1 provided targeted grants to local councils to deliver 6 new dog parks and 13 dog park upgrades across Victoria. A list of projects is available at www.environment.vic.gov.au/dog-parks.

Round 2 is a competitive grants process for local councils to design and deliver projects that enable people to socialise and exercise their dogs off-leash in areas of greatest need across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

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We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the original custodians of Victoria’s land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria’s Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



Cliff Whitworth Reserve Dog Park, Essendon West. Wurundjeri Country.
Photo credit: Daniel at Artificial Studio.

Program aims

- Invest in and optimise underutilised public land for Victorians to connect with their communities and exercise their dogs.
- Invest in off-leash areas to meet the growing demand for people to socialise and exercise their dog off-leash.
- Facilitate upgrades of existing dog off-leash areas to support contemporary needs and future longevity.
- Contribute to urban greening, cooling and shading of local neighbourhoods.
- Improve connectivity of open spaces with other points of interest and activity.
- Increase accessibility and safety of park users for all abilities and all genders.
- Support involvement of Traditional Custodians.

Who can apply?

Round 2 is open to all local councils in Victoria.

The park or reserve must be publicly owned (either by local government or another public land manager). If council does not own the land, evidence of in-principle landowner consent (letter from the land manager), a legally binding land use, community access agreement, or lease is required.

The park or reserve (or area within the broader location) must be:

- currently used as a designated off-leash area for dogs; or
- is intended to be designated primarily for an off-leash area for dogs and will be formally designated as an off-leash area as part of delivering the project.

Eligible organisations can only submit one application.

What is the available funding?

The total funding available under Round 2 of the program is \$5 million.

Grants of **a maximum value of \$300,000** per project are available to successful applicants. There is no minimum amount that can be requested for funding.

Applicants can apply for funding of **up to \$100,000 with no cash co-contribution requirement.**

Co-contribution requirements for projects

For funding sought above \$100,000 (up to the maximum funding available of \$300,000) applicants are required to provide a cash contribution towards the cost of the project at a funding ratio of 1:1 (\$1 for every additional \$1 sought in funding).

All co-contributions must be cash (i.e. not in-kind). Co-contributions can be from council and/or another funding source.

Table 1: Examples of indicative cash co-contributions and project budgets

Applicant funding request	Applicant cash co-contribution required	Total project budget
\$100,000	0	\$100,000
\$150,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
\$200,000	\$100,000	\$300,000
\$250,000	\$150,000	\$400,000
\$300,000	\$200,000	\$500,000

Project management, planning, design and consultation costs

Applicants may use a **maximum of 20% of grant funding** for:

- project planning and approvals;
- concept and detailed design;
- community consultation (including engagement with Traditional Custodians);
- project management costs of delivering the project.

Estimating project management costs:

To help demonstrate a sound project management and delivery approach, applicants must provide an estimate of the project management approach and costs:

Table 2: Examples of estimated project management, planning, design and consultation costs for a \$300,000 grant*

Budget item	Estimated hours or EFT equivalent	Estimated total costs
Project management (internal staff time)	600 hours council time (@\$60 per hour); or 0.2 EFT (average over life of project)	\$36,000 in-kind estimate*
<i>And/or</i> Project management (external project manager)	<i>And/or</i> 300 hours contractor time (@\$120 per hour)	\$36,000 cash
<i>Plus</i> Other specialist contractor work (e.g. design consultant, engineering, cultural heritage expertise, planning/building approvals etc.)	166 hours specialist contractor time (e.g. 20 hours per week for an 8 week design period)	\$20,000 cash
Total estimated costs		\$56,000

**Note that 'in-kind' contributions are strongly encouraged as a true cost of the project but cannot count towards the cash co-contribution requirement. When estimating an in-kind contribution, please note that it is not required to be acquitted at project completion as part of the Financial Acquittal milestone. It is anticipated that 'in-kind' contributions will be approximately 5% - 15% of the total project cost.*

What might be funded?

Funding will **primarily** be for purpose-built facilities for dogs and their owners to enjoy. This includes new dog parks, or upgrades, replacements, renewals and additions to existing dog off-leash areas.

Examples include (but are not limited to): play features, water bowls, fencing of all or part of the off-leash area, delineation of different areas for active and quiet dogs, replacement of granitic sand areas, refurbishment of existing fencing, signage supporting responsible pet ownership, vegetation buffers, shelter, bins, agility equipment, paths, shade, rocks and other nature-play elements.

A **component** of funding may also be used for supporting infrastructure that benefits dog owners and other park users. Examples include: paths to improve connectivity, lighting to facilitate greater use, all abilities access, tree planting and landscaping for cooling and greening of the open space. Any supporting infrastructure must be located within the existing open space or within 200 metres of the primary dog off-leash area.

Works must be completed by no later than 31 October 2026.

What will not be funded?

The program will not fund the following activities:

- the purchase of land;
- the remediation of contaminated land;
- routine or ongoing maintenance activities;
- works that have already commenced;
- planning/approvals, design, community consultation and project management costs of delivering the project that exceed 20% of the total grant (refer to 'What is the available funding?');
- works that do not support or are considered works that are not complementary to the primary purpose of the project delivering a new or upgraded dog park; and
- works beyond 200 metres of the primary project location.

Case study: Cliff Whitworth Dog Park, Essendon West (City of Moonee Valley)

This paw-some dog park, funded by the Victorian Government's Suburban Parks Program and designed and delivered by Moonee Valley City Council, opened in August 2022. Located on a challenging sloping site under overhead powerlines, the \$275,000 project delivered a fully fenced park with two separate areas for quiet and active dogs.

Features include:

- an open run-about area for exercise;
- a rock scramble for climbing and seating;
- a quiet agility area to build confidence in dogs;
- double-entry gates, seating, bins with waste bags, drinking fountain with spillable dog bowl and signage;
- surrounding tree and garden bed planting for greening and more natural shade.



Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against the criteria below. Each criterion is given a percentage weight to indicate its relative performance in the assessment process.

Criterion 1: How does the project align with the Program aims? (30%)

Applications must demonstrate how the project aligns with the Program aims.

Examples include how the project:

- includes new and upgraded infrastructure and design elements that will enable more people to socialise and exercise their dog off-leash;
- includes practical design elements, e.g. fencing or partial fencing if close to a road or ground surfaces that can withstand high use and increased visitation;
- contributes to the social connections, general wellbeing, safety, functionality and enjoyment of dogs and their owners in the local area;
- improves cooling, shading and greening, e.g. tree planting, landscaping, shelter;
- includes paths or other features that improve the connectivity of the location with other surrounding points of interest and activity;
- considers accessible and safe design elements to support use by park users of all abilities and all genders;
- considers potential impacts on and opportunities to involve Traditional Custodians in the project design and/or delivery.

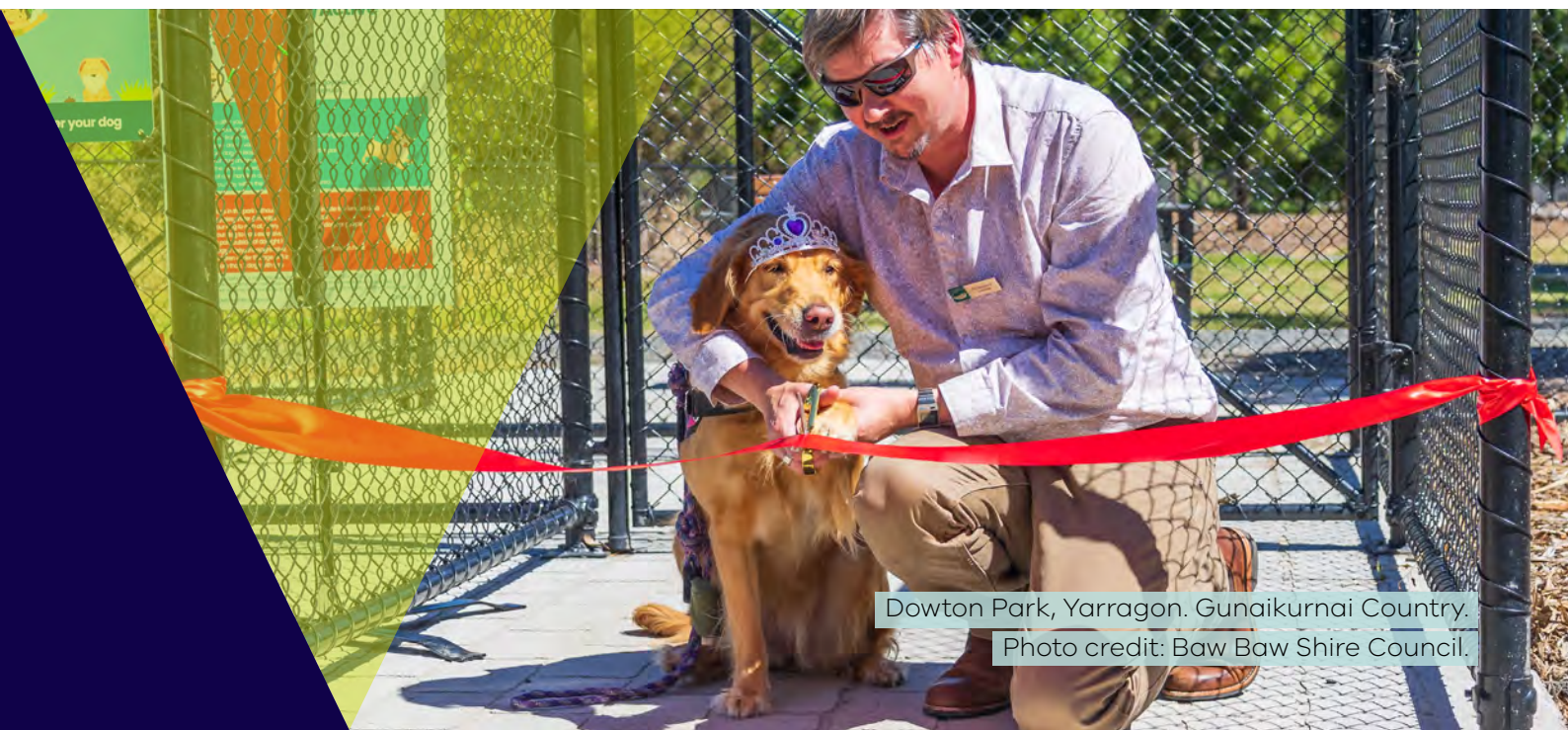
Criterion 2: Why is this project needed? (30%)

Applications must explain:

- why the project, in this location, is in priority need of investment;
- how the project supports contemporary community benefits and needs, and strengthens social connections;
- how the project provides for future longevity.

Examples of evidence includes:

- community demand and/or support for the project;
- visitation data demonstrating that use of the location or nearby locations for dog off-leash exercise has increased;
- demographic data demonstrating that the population within the local area has grown and/or changed and is increasing demand;
- dog registration data within the Local Government Area (LGA);
- analysis of existing conditions, e.g. asset condition advice;
- analysis of expected community benefits and improved social connections;
- alignment with Council strategies and/or plans, e.g. Open Space Strategy, Domestic Animal Management Plan, park masterplan.



Downton Park, Yarragon. Gunaikurnai Country.

Photo credit: Baw Baw Shire Council.

Criterion 3: How effectively and efficiently will the project be delivered? (30%)

Applications must demonstrate that the project can be delivered effectively and efficiently by no later than **31 October 2026**.

Examples of evidence includes:

- providing examples of sound project management and delivery on similar and recent capital works projects;
- the project budget, including cash co-contributions (if applicable); project management hours (internal/external/combination); planning, design and approvals/reports; site remediation (if applicable), and a realistic contingency;
- the project timeframes, including adequate time for planning; approvals and design, community engagement (including with Traditional Custodians) and construction;
- proposed project governance arrangements, particularly project management (including team, roles and responsibilities) and the ability to meet the administrative requirements of the grant funding agreement.

Criterion 4: Risk management (10%)

Applications must demonstrate that project risks have been adequately considered and can be mitigated and/or managed.

Examples of evidence includes:

- site analysis showing that the land ownership, management and site conditions are straightforward (including whether the project location is a designated dog off-leash area or intended to be as part of this project);
- a project risk analysis, including identified risks; likely impact; and proposed mitigation/management measures;
- confirmation of the approach to ongoing maintenance;
- the portion of the project budget allocated for contingencies. Note: In accordance with best practice project management principles, a contingency budget for capital works is recommended in the budget section of the application.

What supporting documents will need to be provided?

The following documents **must** be submitted as part of the project application:

- site location map clearly showing the project location (mandatory);
- photos of the site (mandatory);
- clear design concept or annotated sketch outlining the proposed works (mandatory);
- an internal review of the site history to assess whether there is potential for contamination to be present. This may include describing the lands past and present uses and review of council information related to the site (mandatory);
- in-principle landowner consent or other evidence of landowner support (if applicable);
- evidence of confirmation of other funding sources (if applicable);
- evidence of relevant works permit/s and/or approvals (if applicable);
- any information relating to community consultation undertaken at the site demonstrating the project need (if applicable);
- any relevant information and supporting strategies or plans (e.g. Park Masterplan, Council Open Space Plan, Domestic Animal Management Plan, Dog Off-leash Plan, etc).

What are the funding conditions?

Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DEECA. The Victorian Common Funding Agreement is used for funding agreements with not-for-profit organisations and Local Government Authorities. It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>.

The activity does not include using the funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislations and regulations, including but not limited to:

- *The Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*
- *The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)*
- *Heritage Act 2017 (Vic)*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)*

Tax implications

Applicants should consult the Australian Taxation Office or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this grant funding.

Acknowledging the Victorian Government's support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support and promotional guidelines (www.deeca.vic.gov.au/grants) will form part of the funding agreement. Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project and must comply with the Acknowledgement and Publicity Guidelines.

Payments

Payments will be made as long as:

- the funding agreement has been signed by both parties;
- grant recipients provide reports as required, or otherwise demonstrate that the activity is progressing as expected;
- other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.

Monitoring

Grant recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This will include: a project plan, detailed designs, evidence of any required approvals and reports, online progress report, attending at least one site inspection/s, project event, online final report and financial acquittal.

Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by the department for the purposes of administering your grant application and informing Members of Parliament of successful applications. Personal information may also be disclosed to external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other Government Departments for assessment, reporting, advice, comment or for discussions regarding alternative or collaborative grant funding opportunities. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and other applicable laws.

DEECA is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at www.deeca.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Photo: Mount Waverley Linear Reserve. Wurundjeri Country.



Requests for access to information about you held by DEECA should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by emailing Foi.unit@deeca.vic.gov.au.

Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

Applications must be submitted via the Grants Online Portal by 14 October 2024.

Note: No hard copy applications will be accepted. Late and incomplete applications may not be considered.

What is the application process?

Applications are submitted online using the Grants Online Portal. A link will be provided to eligible organisations once a Program Briefing has been undertaken.

Attaching required documents:

Supporting documents must be in an acceptable file type, such as Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG. The maximum file size for each file is 10MB.

You will receive an application number when you submit an application online. Please quote this number in all communications with the department relating to your application.

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application you can email them to grantsinfo@deeca.vic.gov.au, quoting your application number.

Additional information

An online Program Briefing will be held for eligible applicants on 19 August 2024. To register, please email the DEECA Open Space Programs team open.space@deeca.vic.gov.au.

For any assistance or if you have any questions during the application process, please email the above. To ensure equity in the application process, responses to questions will be provided to all applicants unless DEECA determines there are reasonable grounds for limiting the response to the applicant requesting the information (e.g. commercial-in-confidence documentation).

Key dates

Program guidelines provided to eligible organisations	Early August 2024
Program briefing	19 August 2024
Applications open	19 August 2024
Applications close	14 October 2024
Applications assessment and funding decision	Late 2024
Applicants notified	Early 2025
Project funding agreements established	Early 2025
Projects formally commence	Early to mid-2025
Project construction completed	No later than 31 October 2026
Final reports and financial acquittals submitted to DEECA	No later than 31 December 2026

Key dates may be subject to change. Eligible organisations will be advised of any changes accordingly.

What is the notification process?

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing after the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback on their application via open.space@deeca.vic.gov.au.

Checklist

Before applying, complete the checklist below.

Have you:

- read these guidelines carefully?
- checked if you are, or your organisation is, eligible for this funding?
- checked if your project is eligible for this funding?
- checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your project?
- prepared the appropriate mandatory and optional supporting documents?



Barwon River Dog Park, Belmont. Wadawurrung Country.
Photo credit: City of Greater Geelong.

Cover image: Downton Park, Yarragon. Gunaikurnai Country. Photo credit: Baw Baw Shire Council

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